## **Approved**

# Rockville Environment Commission Minutes of the Meeting of Thursday, February 2, 2017

Diamondback Terrapin, City Hall, 111Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland

#### Attendance

Commissioners Present: Chair John Becker, Steve Cardon, Clark Reed, Steve Sprague, Helen

Triolo and Fedon Vayanis.

Commissioners Absent: Amanda Aparicio, Lea Rosenbohm, Alicia Hosmer

Council Liaison: Mark Pierzchala

City Staff: Erica Shingara Guests: Susan Koester

## Meeting Commencement and Introductions

The meeting convened at 7:01 pm by Chair Becker.

#### Approval of Agenda

Chair Becker requested the addition of general updates to the beginning of the agenda. Commissioner Reed moved and Commissioner Sprague seconded a motion to approve the February 2, 2017 agenda as revised. The motion passed (5-0). Commissioner Triolo was absent for the vote.

### <u>Updates</u>

- Councilmember Pierzchala reported that the new City Manager was not able to attend the Commission meeting due to a last-minute emergency meeting, but intends to attend a future meeting. He also noted that Board and Commission appointments are scheduled for February 27.
- Commissioner Reed reported that Rockville will host a Town Hall Meeting on Diversity on February 9 at the Senior Center.
- Commissioner Triolo reported that due to increased evening commitments, she will resign from the Commission. She noted potential future opportunities for coordination between her work with the Science Center and the Environment Commission.

#### Approval of Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Cardon moved and Commissioner Reed seconded a motion to approve the January 6, 2017 minutes. The motion passed (6-0).

#### Expanded Polystyrene (Styrofoam) Ban

- Councilmember Pierzchala reported that Senator Cheryl Kagan's bill on polystyrene, Senate Bill 186, was introduced on January 18. The City submitted testimony in support. The companion bill, House Bill 229 will have a public hearing on February 15. He noted that there is an opportunity for the City/Commission to provide testimony at this public hearing.
- Commissioner Vayanis reported that he conducted extensive research on the health and environmental effects of polystyrene. He noted difficulties in finding information on the health

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- impacts of polystyrene (compared to styrene); however, the environmental impacts were documented.
- Commissioner Reed moved and Commissioner Sprague seconded a motion to request permission from the Mayor and Council for the Commission to testify on behalf of the City on HB 229. The motion was approved (5-0-1).
  - ➤ Action Item: Erica Shingara will coordinate with the City Manager's office on the process for seeking approval to testify. If approved, Chair Becker is available to testify.

#### **Environmental Excellence Awards Nominations**

- Commissioner Sprague reported that he and Commissioner Rosenbohm interviewed Dawson's Market and compiled information for a nomination for Outstanding Leadership in Environmental Practices. Dawson's has an Assistant Manager for Sustainability, an employee environmental working group, and several policies and program to reduce waste. For example, they have several well-marked recycling stations and have added a new station for specialized items such as mixed plastic wrappers, clamshells and drink pouches. They have a composting program for store food waste that coordinates with a local Montgomery County farmer that is also a vendor. They host a local Farmers Market for the community.
- Staff reviewed an Outstand Environmental Education nomination for Rockville's Community Services Youth Program which consists of students that participate in the Latino Youth Development Program and the Summer Civic Program. The program organized students to successfully undertake several environmental projects where the students volunteered to help clean and protect Rockville's local streams and environment in partnership with the Environmental Management Division.
  - The Summer Civic Program empowers Rockville students to address issues in their community and engage in positive social development and community involvement. Forty-two students earned 196 Environmental Volunteer Service Hours in 2015 and 2016. They cleaned up 30 bags of litter and large trash items during two stream cleanups at the tributary behind the Twinbrook Community Recreation Center. They placed "Do Not Pollute" markers onto 20 storm drains in and around Rockville Town Center to encourage residents to reduce pollution to storm drains and ultimately our local streams. The also removed invasive plants from a 400-foot section of stream valley in Dawson Farm Park and assisted with two Save Our Streams benthic macroinvertebrate stream sample collections in the Twinbrook Community Recreation Center tributary to learn about aquatic biology and help assess the health of Rockville's streams.
  - O The Latino Youth Development Program promotes positive, team-oriented activities and physical exercise for male students in grades 7 through 10. Twenty-eight students earned 168 Environmental Volunteer Service Hours in 2016. They cleaned up 16 bags of trash during four stream cleanups at Maryvale Park, Thomas Farm, and Winding Rose Tributary. They have adopted a stream segment through the Rockville Adopt-A-Stream Program to allow returning and future program participants to continue seasonal stream cleanups.
- Chair Becker inquired if there were any other nominations for the different categories: outstanding individual, achievement, green building and environmental education.
- Councilmember Pierzchala noted the previous nomination for Montgomery College's science building and Councilmember Triolo noted the previous application for the Unitarian Church.
  - Action Item: Councilmember Pierzchala will inquire about a new nomination for Montgomery County's Science Building.

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- o **Action Item**: Staff will check on the Unitarian Church.
- o **Action Item**: The Commission will review nominations for recommendation at the March meeting. Award options include April 17 or April 24.

### Hometown Holidays (HTH) Planning

- Chair Becker volunteered to complete HTH registration materials and help schedule volunteers for the outreach booth.
- The Commission discussed opportunities to partner with other entities; including Montgomery
  County's residential energy programs, collocate with City booth, or inquire if RBAC is interested
  in the booth on Sunday.
- The Commission identified other items needed, including restocking brochures, making new panels for the wheel, and arranging a cart for cleanup. It was noted that electricity would not be available at the booth again this year.

## **Annual Report**

- Commissioner Becker distributed a draft of an annual report to the Mayor and Council on the Commission's accomplishments and future activities. He also distributed a project schedule for review and comment. He noted key dates for activities and a schedule that follows the City's fiscal year.
  - **Action Item:** Commissioners to send the Chair comments by the next meeting.

#### Climate Action Plan and Stakeholder Process

- The Mayor and Council have an initiative to work with stakeholders to create a community climate action plan. Staff distributed a <u>draft Regional Climate and Energy Action Plan, 2017-2020 from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG)</u>. COG researched best practices across the country and compiled a list of potential actions that regional jurisdictions could voluntarily pursue to help reduce emissions from government operations and the community overall. The Commission discussed using this document as a starting point in the development of Rockville's Climate Action Plan. To some extent, Rockville is currently implementing many of the action items identified in this document. Other actions may future actions for consideration or may not be relevant.
  - ➤ Action Item: Staff will add columns to the table to identify status, and collect input from the Committees on portential short term and long term goals and questions. The document will be shared on Google docs for the Committees to review and edit.
  - Action Item: Each committee will review the COG's draft plan on the Google docs and identify which sections they will evaluate to determine which actions are most suitable for Rockville. The committees will also start brainstorming potential processes for working with various community stakeholders over the next year to develop our climate action plan.

### **Committee Reports:**

- *Composting and Recycling Committees:* Commissioner Sprague noted the Committee discussed different programs aimed at reducing food waste, such as better planned food purchases, buy what you eat campaign (EPA webinar), working with Farmer's Market to reduce food waste, and just in time processing.
- *Energy Committee:* Commissioner Reed reported that the Clean Energy Jobs Act (which increases RPS to 25% by 2020) passed the veto override. They are discussing options for

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community solar and increasing access for low to moderate income residents. A review of City permits indicate that the City received approximately 534 permit requests for solar installations.

- **Sustainability**: Commissioner Triolo noted no committee updates. They are still working on planning the Community Wildlife Habitat Celebration on March 23.
  - ➤ **Action Item:** Staff will coordinate with Commissioner Hosmer on invites and event organization.
- *Watershed:* Commissioner Cardon reported stream cleanup plans for April 8<sup>th</sup> at Maryvale Park. The Committee also reviewed the draft NPDES MS4 permit.
  - ➤ Action Item: Due to Valentines' Day, the Watershed and Composting and Recycling Committees will reschedule their February meeting.

#### Environment Management Division Update

- Staff noted that the floodplain ordinance was adopted on January 9<sup>th</sup> and will go into effect on July 1, 2017.
- Tentative Earth Month events:
  - March 13: Proclamation. The Commission usually accepts the proclamation at the Mayor and Council meeting.
  - o March 23: Community Wildlife Habitat Celebration
  - o April 1: Green Your Backyard Session
  - o April 8: Potomac River Watershed Cleanup
  - o April 29: CCNC Spring Festival/Plant Sale
- Montgomery County would like to organize an Energy Conservation Challenge between the Environment Commissions of Rockville, Gaithersburg, Takoma Park and Poolesville. Sample energy actions and criteria were reviewed. Commission Reed moved and Commissioner Sprague seconded a motion to participate in Commission Conservation Challenge. The motion was approved (5-0).

#### **New Business**

- Chair Becker noted the various Commissioner term limits and vacancies between October 2016 through June 2017 (6 total) and requested a discussion of the vacancies and the chair position at the March meeting.
- Commission Cardon noted the Commission's meeting was not listed in February Rockville Reports.

#### Adjourn

The Commission adjourned by acclamation at 9:07 p.m.

## **Next Commission Meeting**

The Commission will tentatively meet on Thursday, March 2, 2017 at 7:00 pm in the Diamondback Terrapin Conference Room at the Rockville City Hall, 111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville Maryland 20850-2321. The public is invited to attend.